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NEUROTIC COMPLICATIONS IN LA GRIPPE.*

BY STEPHEN LETT, M.D., M.C.P.S. ONT.,

Medical Superintendent of the Homewood
Retreat, Guelph, Ontario.

Of the various diseases met with during the past decade, there is perhaps none in which neurotic complications have been more frequent than in that form of epidemic influenza which has swept over our land for several successive years, known as "La Grippe." Why such complications should exist to so great an extent in connection with this disease is somewhat difficult to understand. We all know that the malady has a peculiar aptitude for searching out any weak organ or system of organs and making its virulence and power felt upon such weakness; we also know that this is a very neurotic period, that people live at too high a rate of nerve pressure, that they wear out or exhaust their nervous system prematurely; that they hand to posterity a much more unstable nervous organization than did their ancestors who lived by the light of other days, who did one day's work in a day and went to bed at early candle light; who worked during the day and rested both body and mind at night. These things being considered, it is but the sequence of events that many neurotic complications should accompany and follow so potent a cause as "La Grippe." Another very tenable explanation would seem to be that the toxic element in the circulation, upon which the influenza of necessity depends, has a special affinity for the nervous system. This theory would seem to be sustained when we note the excessive amount of irritation

set up in the nerves, producing many forms of neuralgia and various inflammations, in some cases not stopping short of symmetrical multiple neuritis, a condition held by some to be conclusive of a toxic cause. Perhaps the truth may rest in a combination of these factors.

The neurotic manifestations of la grippe may best be considered as those occurring during the febrile stage, and those which may be classed as post-febrile or sequelae. Early in the disease nervous symptoms occur, and may be so pronounced as to give the malady a distinctive character or neurotic type. Such symptoms would include a severe initial chill, followed by intense headache and neuralgia, pains in the course of sets of nerves, especially the fifth pair, down the spine, particularly noted in the lumbar region; also many painful muscular sensations, hyperæsthesia of the organs of special sense, obtinate insomnia, which may be the forerunner of a transitory psychosis, associated with delusions or hallucinations of exaltation or depression, and which may be followed by a pronounced meningitis, leading to permanent mental impairment or ending in coma and death. Many of the above symptoms are of course present in a more or less marked degree in the ordinary fevers and exanthems, but in epidemic influenza they are more pronounced and would seem to possess a distinctive character.

With regard to the nervous sequelae of la grippe two important factors should be borne in mind: First, their severity bears no relative proportion to the severity of the primary disorders. Second, the most serious nervous disorders may follow a second or third attack of influenza, although these successive attacks may each be milder than the preceding one. Amongst the nervous complica-

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tions to be noted after the subsidence of the fever may be mentioned the following motor disturbances: Well-marked paresis of the facial and ocular muscles and of the organs of speech, paralysis of one or more of the extremities as a result of degenerative neuritis or, as has been recorded, severe organic changes in the central nervous system. Sensory disturbances are also present in some cases, such as hyperesthesia and anæsthesia, either localized or extending to a more or less extensive area, and I have no doubt that many cases of partial deafness and "grip ear" depend upon an interference with the harmonious working of the auditory nerve. It is also common in the after stages of influenza to note an intense nervous prostration, making convalescence slow, tedious and discouraging.

In addition to the above post-febrile nervous disturbances we meet with true psychosis of a marked asthenic character, which would appear to be the result of a toxic element and have been classed by some authorities amongst the "Toxic Insanities." They present the following types:

Acute mental exhaustion with confusion of ideas, stupor or perhaps hallucinations or delusions, accompanied by great physical prostration, also occasionally intolerance of light and sound. The majority of this class make a good recovery in a few weeks or months. Sometimes, however, a case will run into a chronic condition and become permanently mentally weakened.

Melancholia claims by far the greatest proportion of the post-influenzal insanities, fully one-half. This psychosis is usually present without marked delusion, but it is accompanied by all degrees of mental depression, with loss of interest in their daily avocation or home surroundings, forebodings of evil or impending calamity, bemoaning their pitiable condition and frequently developing suicidal tendencies, which occasionally culminate in the successful accomplishment of the rash act, as a late report testifies with regard to both a husband and his wife. Some of these cases are extremely sensitive to light and sound, are easily agitated and suffer more or less from insomnia; in fact, the insomnia so frequently present in the convalescing stages of the influenza appears to be the starting point of this morbid de-

pression. When suicide does not take place and the family history is good the prognosis is favorable.

Mania is the least frequent of the mental sequelæ of epidemic influenza, contributing only about 18 per cent. of the whole. The recorded cases point to an absence of delusion or hallucination, or even very severe maniacal excitement; the insanity is more of an asthenic type, which, with sustaining treatment and a good family history, presents a favorable prognosis.

In addition to these principal types of insanity we may have paranoia and post-febrile hysteria. In such cases, however, a predisposing cause will usually be found, the influenza merely playing the part of the match that started the fire in the already arranged kindling.

In all forms of mental and nervous maladies resulting from influenza where there has not been some previous mental trouble or hereditary predisposition the prognosis is usually favorable, though recovery may be slow; where these factors exist the contrary obtains.

STIEFEL'S MEDICINAL SOAPS.

Medical Press and Circular says: "We have received from Mr. John Morgan Richards, of Holborn Viaduct, samples of various medicated soaps manufactured by Stiefel, at the well-known soap laboratory at Offenbach (Germany). There is a sublimate soap, containing one-half per cent. of the salt, which provides an easy and reliable means of curing scabies, phtheiriasis. It is also recommended in the treatment of syphilitic eruptions. Among the milder combinations are a borax soap, an ichthyol soap and a birch tar and sulphur soap. The value of ichthyol in the local treatment of a certain class of skin affections is now generally recognized, and in the form of soap it is peculiarly applicable. The tar and sulphur soap is not only an antiseptic, but possesses marked emollient properties, which should prove of service in remedying the disagreeable roughness of the skin, which is, in many instances, induced by the use of ordinary soaps. The same remarks apply to the borax soap, which leaves the skin singularly smooth and white. The soap basis is a well-made, perfectly neutral compound, devoid of uncombined alkali on the one hand and of any excess of fat on the other."

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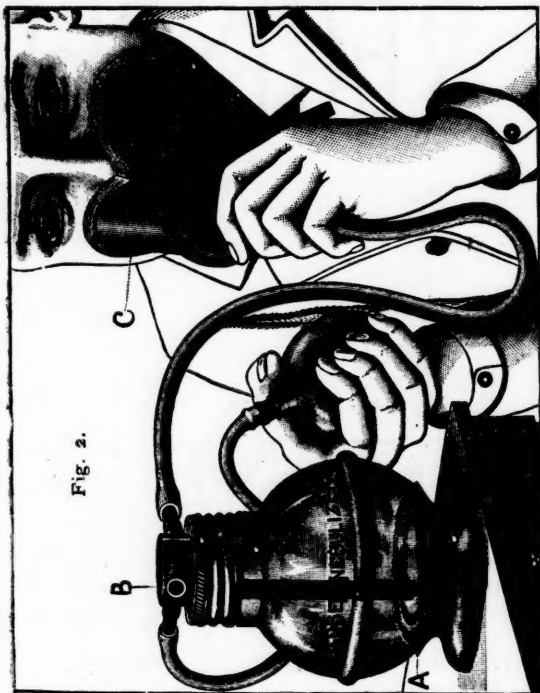


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Miscellany.

THE APPLICATIONS OF FORMALIN.

Formic aldehyde has proved a most interesting substance both to physiologists and bacteriologists ever since its discovery by A. W. Hoffmann in 1869. Its investigation and especially researches of a practical character have been greatly extended since the introduction of its 40 per cent. aqueous solution into commerce under the name of formalin.

The preservative and antiseptic action of formalin is apparently due to the chemical activity of formic aldehyde in attacking and hardening albuminoid substances and rendering them unfit to enter into vital reactions. The degree in which formic aldehyde possesses this property has been so amply demonstrated by the investigations of Stahl, Liebreich, Blum, Penzold, Gegner, Hauser, Lehmann and Rideal, to say nothing of the work of earlier investigators, that any fresh data in this respect is superfluous and only of value so far as it suggests fresh practical applications for the organic sublimate, as Dr. Finzelberg terms it.

The preservative character of formalin solution has been generally acknowledged and welcomed by all collectors of animal and vegetable preparations, macroscopic and microscopic, and has been the subject of so many original papers and lecture demonstrations recently that they can only be briefly referred to here.

As Professor F. Cohn points out, the protoplasm in organic cells is transformed so rapidly by the addition of 1 or 2 per cent. formalin that no plasmolysis takes place and the finest internal structural detail is preserved. In the Botanical Society, at Hamburg, Professor Sadebeck pointed out the advantages of formic aldehyde solutions for museum purposes, which were also summarized by Dr. Holfert in a paper before the Pharmaceutical Society in Berlin.

As regards the macroscopical appearance of specimens preserved in formalin solutions two points are to be noted. The specimens do not shrivel so quickly nor so much as when alcohol is employed, and no extraction or scarcely any extraction of coloring matters takes place. As an instance of how little the dyeing properties of preserved specimens are affected it may be mentioned that even the delicate blue iodine reaction for starch is only very slightly weakened.

The sterilizing powers of formic aldehyde solutions have been assessed by different observers at varying values, according to the experimental conditions maintained by them. It is important that these should have a practical significance in order that the values may apply to every day experience. In this direction the recent work of Professor Cohn is of service. He found that peas, after soaking in water for

(Continued on page x.)

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is attending the use of our DEPLETING AND ANTISEPTIC and ASTRINGENT AND ANTISEPTIC SUPPOSITORIES in the treatment of Leucorrhœa and other pelvic difficulties. They are fast succeeding the variously medicated, seldom successful, but time honored tampon, and are acknowledged "triumphs in modern pharmacy."

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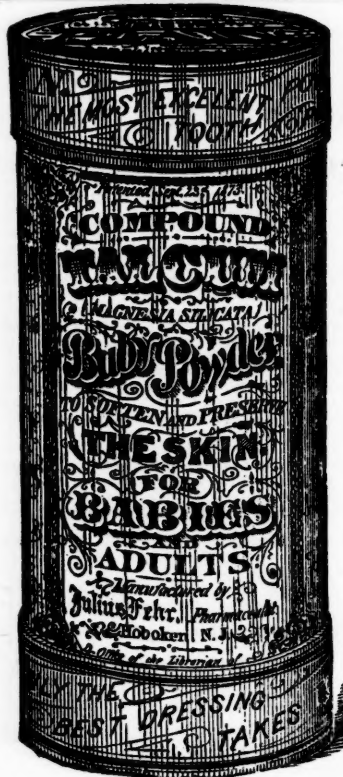
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YELLOW FIRE.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Take of | |
| Oxalate of sidium | 18 drs. |
| Shellac | 18 drs. |
| Nitrate of potassium | 22 drs. |
| Chlorate of potassium | 22 drs. |
| Mix. | |

The shellac should be in a coarse powder, obtained by grinding through a drug-mill.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Take of | |
| Nitrate sodium | 6 troy ozs. |
| Sulphur | 1 troy oz. |
| Lampblack | 1 troy oz. |
| Mix. | |

ORANGE-RED.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Take of | |
| Sulphur | 3½ troy ozs. |
| Chalk | 8½ troy ozs. |
| Chlorate of potassium | 13 troy ozs. |
| Mix. | |

ROSE-RED.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Take of | |
| Charcoal, willow | ¼ troy oz. |
| Chlorate of potassium | 1½ troy ozs. |
| Sulphur | 3 troy ozs. |
| Nitrate of strontium (dry) | 10 troy ozs. |
| Mix. | |

VIOLET FIRE.

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Take of | |
| Potassium chlorate | 6 troy ozs. |
| Calcium carbonate | 2 troy ozs. |
| Powdered malachite | 2 troy ozs. |
| Sulphur | 4 troy ozs. |
| Mix. | |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Take of | |
| Alum | 3 troy ozs. |
| Carbonate of potassium | 3 troy ozs. |
| Sulphur | 4 troy ozs. |
| Chlorate of potassium | 15 troy ozs. |
| Mix. | |

WHITE FIRE.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Take of | |
| Charcoal | 2 parts. |
| Sulphur | 22 parts. |
| Potassium nitrate | 76 parts. |
| Mix. | |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Take of | |
| Stearin | 1 troy oz. |
| Carbonate of barium | 1 troy oz. |
| Sugar of milk | 4 troy ozs. |
| Nitrate of potassium | 4 troy ozs. |
| Chlorate of potassium | 12 troy ozs. |
| Mix. | |

RED FIRE.

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Take of | |
| Sulphur | 2 troy ozs. |
| Black (sulphide of) antimony | 2 troy ozs. |
| Nitrate of potassium | 2 troy ozs. |
| Nitrate of strontium (dry) | 10 troy ozs. |
| Mix. | |

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Take of | |
| Chlorate of potassium | 1 part. |
| Shellac | 1 part. |
| Nitrate of potassium | 3 parts. |
| Mix. | |

GREEN FIRE.

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Take of | |
| Nitrate of barium | 20 troy ozs. |
| Sulphur | 1½ troy ozs. |
| Chlorate of potassium | 1½ troy oz. |
| Black (sulphide of) antimony | ½ troy oz. |
| Charcoal, willow | ¼ troy oz. |
| Mix. | |

Miscellany.

(Continued from page iv.)

several days and when in a stage of rapid decomposition, were completely disinfected by the addition in some cases of 0.1 per cent., in most of 0.2 per cent., and in all cases of 0.3 per cent. formic aldehyde and did not undergo a further change for six months. An addition of 0.1 per cent. to hard-boiled white of egg preserved it in like manner. Aqueous infusions thick with bacterial life cleared on addition of 0.1 to 0.3 per cent. formic aldehyde, the dead bacteria sinking gradually to the bottom and the offensive odor immediately disappearing.

According to these experiments an addition of about 15 or 20 c.c. of commercial 40 per cent. formic aldehyde solution to a litre of water is therefore sufficient for all such purposes, which corresponds to about the quantities recommended by the manufacturers of formalin, namely a tablespoonful to a quart of water.

The peculiar property of formic aldehyde, owing to its affinity for gelatinous and albuminoid substances, of attacking the living as well as the dead animal skin and converting it into a leather-like condition, admits of several practical applications. The observation made by the manufacturers of formalin and communicated by them to Dr. Stahl, that when the solution is brought upon the skin it rapidly penetrated and produced a local necrosis of the tissues without any appearance of inflammation or sore formation, is of great therapeutical interest, not to say of value. The external application of formalin has been recommended in lupus, cancer, etc., and also in one-half per cent. solution for the irrigation of cavities. Trials made with formalin for the removal of polypi, lipomae, and similar new growths on both men and animals have so far met with great success.

As regards the internal administration of formic aldehyde the irritating action of the solution or vapors on the mucous membrane even in the most dilute state is in the first instance painful, but according to Dr. Finzelberg the primary sensitiveness of the human mucous membrane is soon lost. Experiments have been made in France and also by Koch as to the effect of the vapors in pulmonary consumption, but no resolutions Aronson found that polymerization has yet been made. In aqueous solution gradually took place to paraformic aldehyde, which is as active as calomel but non-poisonous, and can be given to children in doses of $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 grains.

—The Therapist.

The address of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell to the American Medico-Psychological Association, with appended letters from prominent neurologists, will appear in the July issue of The Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases, and it is important that it should be read by all physicians.

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Asst. Surg. J. A. Guthrie, detached from the C. S. Str. Blake and to the U. S. S. Minnesota.

Asst. Surg. B. R. Ward, detached from the U. S. R. S. Vermont and to the U. S. C. S. Str. Blake.

Asst. Surg. F. C. Cook, detached from instruction at Naval Laboratory and to the Vermont.

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Professor of Clinical Medicine, Chicago Post-Graduate College; Honorary Professor and formerly Professor of Practice of Medicine and Clinical Medicine, Medico Chirurgical College of Philadelphia Secretary, Section of Medicine, Ninth International Medical Congress; Ex-President of the Philadelphia Medico-Legal Society, etc., etc.

A few of the reviews concerning Dr. Wimmer's Tables and Notes on Osteology.

"This little work bids fair to rival anything of its kind now in the medical market, and is just the thing for the student to use in the class, dissecting, or quiz-rooms."—*Sunday Standard*, Newark, N. J., March 11th, 1894.

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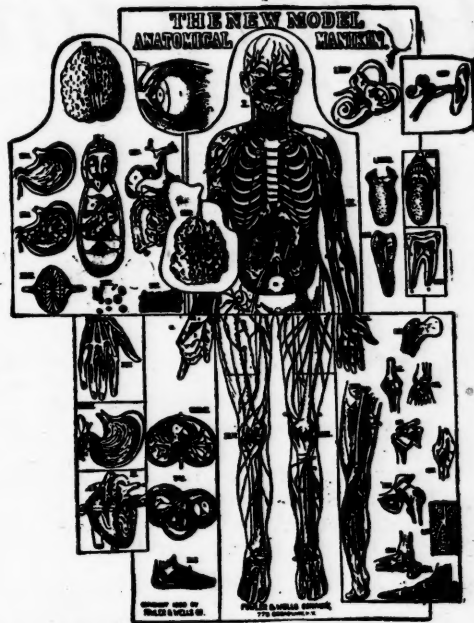
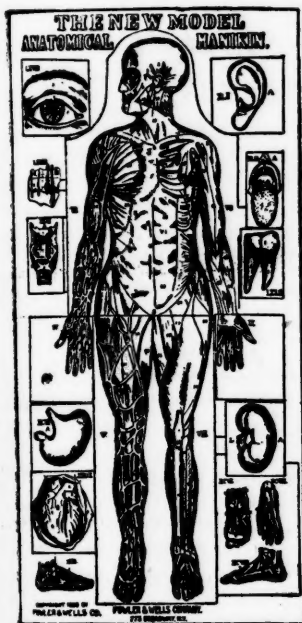
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